

Ranking Member VELAZQUEZ on crafting a bipartisan piece of legislation that authorizes record funding for the SBA over the next 3 years. I intend to continue working to help our small business succeed in today's technology driven economy.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on reauthorizing these important programs.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO AFRICA:
SUPPORT AGOA TEXTILE PROVISIONS BENEFICIAL TO AFRICANS

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2000

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, as we work toward final passage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, I want to reiterate the importance of the provisions related to textile and apparel products. These provisions are paramount to the success of the legislation's primary objective—to promote the use of trade as a vehicle for sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa.

In the March 7, 2000 edition of my hometown journal, the New York Times, Tom Friedman makes a compelling case for a commercially viable trade bill for Africa. While 85% of the garments sold in the United States are sewn outside of the United States, all 48 sub-Saharan African countries produce less than 1% of these products. Twenty-two individual countries export more clothing to the U.S. market than all of the countries in the entire sub-Saharan Africa region. Friedman rightfully points out that even "little Honduras" exports seven times more textiles and apparel to the U.S. than all 48 nations of sub-Saharan Africa combined.

It is critical that the African Growth and Opportunity Act that we pass contains provisions that allow African countries to produce duty-free textile and apparel without insurmountable hurdles and quantitative restrictions. Quantitative restrictions placed on that production are certain to discourage the investments necessary to grow industries and compete with Asian countries in the U.S. import market.

In this case, the so-called "technical details" of the final bill, though often overlooked, will mean the difference between a bill that is commercially viable for African and a symbolic bill. A symbolic bill would fail to sufficiently bolster African economies so that these countries can become better trading partners with the U.S. and better friends in the fight against transnational threats, such as illicit drug trafficking, environmental degradation, international terrorism and infectious disease.

I agree with Tom Friedman. Shame on all of us if we do not seize this historical moment to help, in a meaningful way, over 290 million people in sub-Saharan Africa living on \$1 a day. In this era of globalization we must not ignore and leave behind 10% of the world's population.

[From the New York Times, Mar. 7, 2000]

DON'T PUNISH AFRICA

(By Thomas L. Friedman)

There is a travesty brewing in Congress that, if allowed to continue, will be a source of shame for all Americans. It will certainly be an ugly stain on the U.S. labor movement,

particularly the apparel union and the A.F.L.-C.I.O.—a stain that will highlight all the unions' phony-baloney assertions in Seattle that they just want to improve worker rights around the world and help the poor.

This controversy has to do with a stalled trade bill called The African Growth and Opportunity Act. And the bottom line is this: At a time when Africa is ravaged by AIDS, at a time when 290 million Africans—more than the entire population of the U.S.—are living on a dollar a day, the main U.S. textile union, UNITE!; the main textile manufacturers' lobby, ATMI; and the lawmakers who bow to both of them are blocking a bill that would allow Africans to export clothing to America duty free—instead of with the current 17 percent import tax.

Why the opposition? Because Africa might increase its share of U.S. textile and apparel imports from its current level of 0.8 percent! Shame on the people blocking this bill. Shame on them.

Some 85 percent of the garments sold in the U.S. today are already sewn abroad. Honduras, little Honduras, already exports seven times more textiles and apparel to the U.S. than all 48 nations of sub-Saharan Africa combined. With our minimum wages, we can't produce jeans that retail for \$16 and we don't want to. North Carolina's textile industry has already become highly automated and has moved away from low-value goods to high-value, high-tech fabrics. Much of the unionized labor force sewing clothes in the U.S. is in large cities and comprises new immigrants, many not citizens, since most Americans don't want these jobs.

If Africa were given duty-free access to our market, sophisticated textile plants in North Carolina wouldn't move to Madagascar. China would be the big loser, because Africans have the same skills to knit cashmere sweaters cheaply as people in China, and if Africa were given a 17 percent import tax advantage in shipping to the U.S., manufacturers would move their production from low-wage China to low-wage Africa. Which is why a study by the U.S. International Trade Commission concluded that "the impact of quota removal [for African imports] on U.S. producers and U.S. workers would be negligible."

So why do the unions still oppose it? Sheer knee-jerk protectionism—even though the bill has tough measures to protect against any surge in imports from Africa, and restricts free-trade status to African countries moving toward democracy, economic reform and real worker protection.

No matter. Right now the only version of the bill the textile makers would permit is one that says Africa can only import duty-free into the U.S. if it first buys all the fabric, thread and yarn from U.S. factories, then ships it to Africa to be sewn, and then ships it back to the U.S. to be sold—a costly obstacle course that would prevent any new investment in African factories. The real motto of U.S. trade unions is: We're for more worker standards in Africa, not more work.

This is really bad. This bill isn't a panacea for Africa, but it's important. Throughout the history of industrialization, poor countries have started down the road of development by sewing clothes. It's the one thing that poor people can do right away. It's critical that this bill go through now because by 2005 all the quotas on textile imports into the U.S. will expire. It will be a free-for-all. Right now investors are deciding where to locate plants for 2005—whether to stick with China or branch out to Africa, Vietnam or Mexico. If Africa is shut out from these investment decisions, it will fall even further behind.

The Clintonites talk the talk of Africa and AIDS, but, sadly, they have been afraid to

get tough with the unions on this textile issue. Why is AIDS spreading so quickly among young women in Africa? One reason is that women have so few jobs they have to sell themselves to men with AIDS. Apparel jobs largely employ women. They make a difference.

But this is of no interest to the A.F.L.-C.I.O. crowd. All they care about is that Africa not sell more than 0.8 percent of garments here. Shame on them for what they are doing, and shame on us if we let them.

CONDEMNING THE RACIST AND
ANTI-SEMITIC VIEWS OF THE
REVEREND AL SHARPTON

HON. JOE SCARBOROUGH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2000

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, I offer the following for printing in the RECORD.

Whereas the Congress strongly rejects the racist and incendiary actions of the Reverend Al Sharpton;

Whereas the Reverend Al Sharpton has condoned anti-Semitic views in that protesters from the Reverend Sharpton's National Action Network have referred to members of the Jewish faith as "blood-sucking [J]ews", and "Jew bastards";

Whereas the Reverend Al Sharpton has referred to members of the Jewish faith as "white interlopers" and "diamond merchants";

Whereas the Reverend Al Sharpton was found guilty of defamation by a jury in a New York court arising from the false accusation that former Assistant District Attorney Steven Pagones, who is white, raped and assaulted a fifteen-year-old black girl;

Whereas to this day, the Reverend Al Sharpton has refused to accept responsibility and expresses no regret for defaming Mr. Pagones;

Whereas the Reverend Al Sharpton's vicious verbal anti-Semitic attacks directed at members of the Jewish faith, and in particular, a Jewish landlord, arising from a simple landlord-tenant dispute with a black tenant, incited widespread violence, riots, and the murder of five innocent people;

Whereas the Reverend Al Sharpton's fierce demagoguery incited violence, riots, and murder in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, New York, following the accidental death of a black pedestrian child hit by the motorcade of Orthodox Rabbi Menachem Schneerson;

Whereas the Reverend Al Sharpton led a protest in the Crown Heights neighborhood and marched next to a protester with a sign that read, "The White Man is the Devil";

Whereas the Reverend Al Sharpton has insulted members of the Jewish faith by challenging Jews to violence and stating to Jews to "pin down", their yarmulkes; and

Whereas the Reverend Al Sharpton has practiced the policies of racial division and made inflammatory remarks against whites by characterizing the death of Amadou Diallo as a "racially motivated police assassination": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—

(1) condemns the practices of the Reverend Al Sharpton, which seek to divide Americans on the basis of race, ethnicity, and religion;

(2) expresses its outrage over the violence that has resulted due to the Reverend Al Sharpton's incendiary words and actions; and